



Mordekhi's Drash for Shabbat August 11, 2007 / Av 27, 5767

Parashah #47: *R'eh* (See), *D'varim* (Deuteronomy) 11:26-16:17

Haftarah: *Yasha'yahu* (Isaiah) 54:11-55:5

Suggested *Messianic Writings* reading: Acts 2:1-41

Shalom,

Readers may have noticed the lack of a drash last week. Yisraela and I were busy helping welcome a brand new grandson, Elias Kadin, into the world. He is our third grandson, our daughter and husband's first-born. Baby is fine; mama had some trouble, but is daily doing better. Proud Papa is doing fine also. Adonai heard and is answering the prayers of the righteous who were coming before him on our daughter's behalf. *Todah rabbah* (thank you very much)!

This week's Parashah begins with Moshe laying the foundation for the bulk of Deuteronomy – telling the people of Israel that YOU have to make the choice between receiving a blessing from Adonai, or a curse. Thousands of years later, it is still up to us to make our own choice of who we will serve. There is really no such thing as an atheist, for either we serve the Creator, or we serve the created. I want to point out what I see in looking at the word “curse” in verse 26. If we look back at *B'reshet* (Genesis) 12:3, HaShem tells Avraham that He will “bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you.” The Hebrew root of “bless” both times is *bah-rahk* [ברך], which means “to bless, to praise, to honor.” “Curse” in the Hebrew is two different words: “I will *curse* those...” is *ah-rah* [ארר] which means “to bitterly curse, to render powerless, to resist, to condemn.” “Those who *curse* you...” is *kah-lahl* [קלל], which means “to make light of, to bring into contempt, to despise, to be insignificant, to be of small worth, to belittle.” This could run anywhere from mocking Israel, to threatening to destroy Israel, to acceptance of replacement theology. To me, *kah-lahl* seems to apply more to our present physical life, but *ah-rah* applies more to our eternal life.

Therefore, as *kah-lahl* is used in D'Varim 11:26, we primarily see a reference to life as lived on earth. In other words, if you listen to and obey the words of HaShem, you will be blessed; if you do not listen to or obey the words of HaShem, He will not bless you – He will cause you to be unworthy of being blessed. Now in our human minds, we tend to think that being blessed means with finances and constant good. That is partly true, but there are many wealthy and healthy ungodly people living the “good” life. As believers, we need to understand “bless” more in line with the words of Proverbs 2:1-12: “My son, if you will receive my words and store my commands inside you, paying attention to wisdom, inclining your mind toward understanding – yes, if you will call for insight and raise your voice for discernment, if you seek it as you would silver and search for it as for hidden treasure – then you will understand the fear of ADONAI and find knowledge of G-d. For ADONAI gives wisdom; from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding. He stores up common sense for the upright, is a shield to those whose conduct is blameless, in order to guard the courses of justice and preserve the way of those faithful to him. Then you will understand righteousness, justice, fairness and every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, knowledge will be enjoyable for you, discretion will watch over you, and discernment will guard you. They will save you from the way of evil and from those who speak deceitfully.” And even this is only a portion of being blessed. There are health blessings, family blessings, relational blessings, and other blessings too numerous to mention.

And certainly “bad things happen to good people.” Richard Wurmbrand, a Jewish believer who spent 14 years in Communist prisons from the 40's to the 60's for preaching the Good News, and who later wrote the classic *Tortured for Christ*, says this in his book *The Oracles of God* concerning suffering: “I know of no great character formed apart from suffering. A world without suffering would consist of weaklings. What kind of love endures without painful sacrifice?” No one likes to suffer, no one likes pain, but because of the fall of man at the beginning, pain had to become a part of this imperfect life. No, we don't understand it, but we must accept it as part of the plan of a Perfect G-d.

I have heard it said that this life we now live is our training ground, our boot camp, for our entire eternity. Adonai desires that no one perish, and perhaps the return of Yeshua has not happened yet for that very reason. There will come a time when *teshuvah* [תשובה] (repentance, from *shoov* [שוב], to turn back) is no longer offered to mankind, but up to the very end the opportunity to repent will exist. The prophet Yo'el (Joel) wrote of the last days: “Blow the shofar in Tziyon! Sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all living in the land tremble, for the Day of ADONAI is coming! It's upon us! – a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick fog... For great is the Day of ADONAI, fearsome, terrifying! Who can endure it? ‘Yet even now,’ says ADONAI, ‘turn to me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping and lamenting.’ Tear

your heart, not your garments; and turn to ADONAI your G-d. For he is merciful and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in grace, and willing to change his mind about disaster. Who knows? He may turn, change his mind and leave a blessing behind him... The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the coming of the great and terrible Day of ADONAI. At that time, whoever calls on the name of ADONAI will be saved" (Joel 2:1-2, 11-14, 3:4(2:31)-5(2:32)). *Yet even now...* - clear up to the end. But we must never play around with waiting to repent and change our ways, our habits. A word of wisdom is found in the ancient Jewish writing, *Perkei Avot* (The Ethics of the Fathers) 2:15, "Repent one day before your death." Do you know when will that be? For those who live in obedience to HaShem, be aware that Joel calls the Day of ADONAI a "great" day. It will be a time of joy and celebration, and not of fear. The Haftarah from *Yeshu'ahu* (Isaiah) promises a glorious future for Israel, for the day will come when "all Israel will be saved." Then "in righteousness you will be established, far from oppression, with nothing to fear..." (Isaiah 54:14).

In Acts 2, *Kefa* (Peter) preached that the outpouring of the *Ruakh HaKodesh* (the Holy Spirit) on that particular *Shavuot* (Pentecost) was at least a partial fulfillment of the words of Yo'el, concerning the Day of ADONAI, and that whoever called on His name would be saved. We must understand Acts 2:38 in its context. Jewish people believe that they are the chosen people of G-d, and do not believe that they are lost, as a general rule. That is only partly true, as any strong Messianic Jewish believer will tell you. When *Kefa* presented the facts concerning the death and resurrection of the Messiah, the Jewish listeners asked him, "What should we do?" His answer in verse 38: "Turn from sin (*shoo-voo* [שׁוּבוּ]), and turn to G-d (*bee-t'shoo-vah* [בַּתְּשׁוּבוֹה])¹, and each of you be immersed on the authority of Yeshua the Messiah into forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the *Ruakh HaKodesh*." Rabbi Shmuel stated this correctly, "We express by immersion in water our entrance into the cleansing power of His forgiving, transforming Atonement and Presence, and our purpose to walk in His mitzvot [commandments]." Our weak flesh-man may fail occasionally, or it may fail constantly, but our Gracious Creator continually offers the opportunity to turn back to Him. When we are weak, the enemy of our soul would tell us that we are a failure and that we need to give up, that we are lost, no good. Adonai, the lover of our soul, would say to us to get up, never give up, never give in, but press on, and press in to our Messiah and His redeeming blood, calling upon the *Ruakh HaKodesh* to be our helper.

Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim! (Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!) – true peace will only come with the return of *Sar Shalom*, the Prince of Peace. Believe you me, if the leadership of Israel would only call upon the G-d of their ancestors, things would change quickly in the Middle East.

¹ In the Greek, the terms are *metanoia*, "a new knowledge, a change of mind;" and *epistrepho*, "to turn and go the other way." However, *Kefa* was not preaching in Greek to a Greek-speaking audience. He was at the Temple in Jerusalem, speaking to Hebrew (or possibly Aramaic) listeners. But see the reference to Joel above – if we change our mind and turn to Him, He will change His mind and turn to bless us. This has to happen individually, for nations will be judged by what their leaders and bulk of the population did.

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah (Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi (Marc) & Yisraela Carmela (Teresa)

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you
into heaven, will come back to you in just the
same way as you saw him go into heaven.
(Acts 1:11 CJB)